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SUBJECT: TURKEY/IRAQ: G/IWI AMBASSADOR STEINER DISCUSSES
DEMOCRACY TRAINING FOR IRAQI WOMEN

¶1. (SBU) Summary. Acting Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues Ambassador Steven E. Steiner met on May 23 with Turkish officials and a quasi-governmental training institute, where he found a willingness, and capacity, to compare notes and potentially collaborate on educational and training programs for Iraqi women. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) While in Ankara to take part on the Democracy Assistance Dialogue (DAD) Intergovernmental Conference on Advancing Women's Rights in the BMENA Region, Ambassador Steven E. Steiner met with Turkish Government Iraq Coordinator Oguz Celikkol and deputy Fazli Corman on May 23 to exchange information on U.S. and Turkish democracy training programs for Iraq, particularly for Iraqi women. Celikkol reported that Turkey had provided week-long political and media seminars to a total of 409 Iraqis since 2005 and expected to train an additional 200 by the end of CY 2006. The Turkish training is conducted in Turkey and organized by the MFA, with the help of political parties, media organizations, and the quasi-governmental Public Administration Institute for Turkey and the Middle East (TODAIE). Celikkol said Iraqi demand for such seminars has grown as newer Iraqi political groups hear about them.

¶3. (SBU) Asked about logistical requirements, Corman said Iraqi citizens may apply for Turkish visas at airports and border crossings. Visas are generally granted if applicants show a return ticket and sufficient funds to cover their stay. Celikkol said that most Iraqi parties now have representatives in Turkey who can help with logistics. Candidates for both political party and media seminars have been selected by the Iraqi parties themselves; the Turks have noted an improvement in the quality of selectees over time.

¶4. (SBU) In response to Steiner's questions about the participation of women and members of parliament in the Turkish programs, Celikkol said that the Iraqi parties have sent few women so far, but the Turkish government has lately encouraged them to include more. Turkish training has so far not targeted members of the Iraqi Assembly but some of the participants have been MPs. The new speaker of the Iraqi parliament has recently requested an exchange of experience with Turkish counterparts and the GOT is inclined to support this. Celikkol told Steiner that Turkey is also planning to invite to Turkey seven ethnic Turkmen deputies, both Sunni and Shia, to encourage them to work cooperatively.

¶5. (SBU) Celikkol also said that Turkey is planning a training session in July in Istanbul for about 40 Iraqis, with the focus on the Iraqi constitution. This is being organized in cooperation with the UN and the UN is expected to choose the Iraqi participants.

¶6. (SBU) Celikkol said that Turkey has sufficient capacity to accommodate additional training programs and is open to

collaboration with the U.S. He noted there are several Turkish NGOs dealing with women's issues that could be helpful in organizing programs for Iraqi women. There are also women-owned businesses in Istanbul that could be tapped to assist in economic and business training for Iraqi women. Steiner and Celikkol agreed to exchange further information on our respective programs and stay in contact.

¶17. (SBU) Steiner met separately TODAIE acting director Dr. Oya Citci, who outlined TODAIE's role in providing training modules for the political party seminars. The seminars are designed for 30 participants, who receive lectures on democratic institutions and receive briefings from political parties as well as the High Election Council and other state bodies. TODAIE has boarding and dining facilities available, and receives from the government 300 YTL (approximately USD 200) per hour of instruction provided to the groups.

¶18. (SBU) Citci expressed interest in having TODAIE partner with U.S. organizations to train Iraqi women. She was unsure of the procedures that would need to be followed and said she would have to consult with TODAIE's director general. She provided us later with a copy of instructional materials TODAIE uses with the Iraqi groups (e-mailed to G/IWI).

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